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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0183
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2163
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 000162

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STATE FOR SCA/CEN, SCA/PPD

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SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: MEDIA HIGHLIGHT VISIT BY U.S. COORDINATOR
FOR EURASIAN ENERGY DIPLOMACY

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: Turkmenistan's state media highlighted U.S. Coordinator for Eurasian Energy Diplomacy Steven Mann's January 29 visit to Turkmenistan. Mann's meeting with Turkmenistan's President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov received wide state media coverage. Some international media sources characterized the visit as a push for the Trans-Caspian Pipeline (TCP), which would bypass Russia en route to Europe. END SUMMARY.

STATE MEDIA INTRODUCE MANN'S VISIT

¶2. (U) On January 28, the "Watan" TV news program (Turkmen) announced Mann's upcoming arrival in Turkmenistan, giving accurate details of his planned meetings in the country. Similar reports on the following day appeared on the front pages of the state-run dailies "Neytralniy Turkmenistan" (Russian, circ. 43,091) and "Turkmenistan" (Turkmen, circ. 29,091).

MEDIA HIGHLIGHT MANN'S MEETING WITH TURKMEN LEADER

¶3. (U) The January 29 "Watan" TV news program highlighted Mann's meeting with President Berdimuhamedov, emphasizing cooperation in the fuel and energy sectors. Mann noted the high interest of leading American companies in establishing close business ties with Turkmenistan. The broadcast reported that President Berdimuhamedov, congratulated Mann on his new position and expressed satisfaction with the pace of development in the ongoing Turkmen-American dialogue.

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA CHARACTERIZE VISIT AS ANTI-RUSSIAN

¶4. (U) On January 29, New York-based EurasiaNet.org, "The Russian publication "Vremya Novostey," and Russian website "NefteGaz.ru" published similar reports that the new Coordinator for Eurasian Energy Diplomacy is the centerpiece of the State Department's efforts to resist Russia's advance into the Caspian Sea Basin. According to these reports, the purpose of Mann's visit was to promote the Trans-Caspian Pipeline project and convince President Berdimuhamedov to allow U.S. companies to explore and develop Turkmenistan's gas fields.

¶5. (U) COMMENT: U.S. Coordinator for Eurasian Energy Diplomacy Steven Mann's visit received generally accurate and wide Turkmen

state-media coverage. Nevertheless, some international news sources, especially Russian ones, took the zero-sum-game approach and characterized Mann's visit as an attempt to gain influence over Turkmenistan and reduce Russia's influence in the Caspian Sea region. END COMMENT.

HOAGLAND